



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913  
PH (517) 373.3447 | FAX (517) 373.5849  
[www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/birkholz/](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/birkholz/)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
03-35

Contact: Amanda Price  
(517) 373-1855

**Birkholz fully funds DEQ's water pollution program**  
*Senators Birkholz and McManus announce new levels of compliance staffing  
for the NPDES program*

**Wednesday, June 18, 2003**-Sens. Patricia Birkholz and Michelle McManus today announced the passage of Senate Bill 252. The legislation supports new water quality fees for the federally required state water pollution control program, called the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The bill passed with key additional amendments allowing the increase of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) water quality Compliance Officers by 25 percent without increasing the use of taxpayer dollars.

“By restructuring the fee system to correlate with the workload in processing permits, we are raising additional funds for water compliance without the need for more General Fund dollars,” said Birkholz. “This procedure is a prorata approach based on the efforts needed to process permits and does not force us to pick winners or losers.”

Sen. McManus said, “Not only does this legislation protect Michigan’s water resources, but it does so in a fair and balanced manner. In addition, the inclusion of General Fund completes the funding picture.”

Sen. McManus, R-Lake Leelanau, Chair of the Senate Appropriation’s Subcommittee for the DEQ budget, included \$3.1 million in new revenue for the DEQ’s water quality division. This line item will be adjusted to reflect both the additional funding and staffing.

--More--

The nearly \$2 million of revenue was designated from the general fund and will be maintained in the budget, with this funding coming in part from the Single Business Tax currently paid by businesses for the regulation of licenses and permits.

Sen. Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township, Chair of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee, also acknowledged the significance of the new water quality revenue in the DEQ budget. “This is an important step for the Senate to take—we recognized the critical role of compliance in this program and worked to ensure that the Department was provided with the resources it needed to do this important job of ensuring our state’s water quality!”

Birkholz also praised the work of committee colleague, Sen. Bruce Patterson, R-Canton; for his addition of an amendment that requires the DEQ to coordinate information between its NPDES permit program and the water quality monitoring. “This amendment squarely addresses one of the four main recommendations of the Great Lakes Task Force to make sure that we have an effective sharing of information to improve the job we do in monitoring water quality.”

The legislation now moves to the House for consideration.